

**Department of Natural Resources
Affirmative Action and Diversity Report and Plan
July 31, 2008**



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OVERVIEW OF THE DNR

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is the state agency charged with conserving and enhancing the state's natural resources. The general direction of DNR operations is set forth in the Code of Iowa 455A.2: "A department of natural resources is created which has the primary responsibility for state parks and forests, protecting the environment, and managing energy, fish, wildlife, and land and water resources in this state." The Department has a wide range of functional responsibilities. To meet them, the DNR acts as a major regulatory force, a land manager, and a significant source of technical assistance, data and education. The DNR's primary responsibilities are:

- Resource protection and management
- Recreation
- Regulation and enforcement
- Information and general assistance

The DNR has an annual budget of \$200 million derived from various revenue sources. Of that budget, 17 percent is appropriated from state general funds with the remainder from a variety of sources, including the federal government. The Department has a total of 1,170 full-time equivalent (FTE) and 945 permanent employees. Seasonal employees, interns, and contract employees comprise the remaining positions. Males (72 percent) outnumber females and Caucasians (95 percent) outnumber minorities. The average employee is 45 years old with 14 years of service. Within the Department professional position classes comprise the largest group, requiring education and training in scientific, engineering and conservation fields. In FY07, 20 percent of the DNR's workforce was eligible for retirement within three years. Retirement eligibility within the supervisor increases to 42 percent.

Since 1999, DNR volunteers have been an integral part of the Department. These volunteers assist with natural resource activities around the state. On a yearly basis, 10,000 Iowa volunteers provide the Keepers of the Land Volunteer program with an average of 100,000 hours of service (equivalent to 48 full-time employees, a value of over \$1.3 million). The Keepers of the Land AmeriCorps program also provides considerable assistance through the contributions of 54 statewide AmeriCorps members.

The DNR's mission statement sets out the purpose and guides the activities of the large, complex organization of Iowa's natural resource agency. The strategic initiatives are supported by a set of outcomes and performance measures. The mission, strategic initiatives and desired outcomes provide focus and direction to the DNR's work and communicate the results we strive to deliver. Core competencies are required by all positions in an organization in order to be able to successfully perform duties required to meet the organization's mission, vision, values and strategic plan and objectives. These competencies apply to all

DNR employees and outline the knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviors considered key to successful performance.

MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve and enhance our natural resources in cooperation with individuals and organizations to improve the quality of life in Iowa and ensure a legacy for future generations.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Iowa will have a healthy and safe environment.
- Iowa will have abundant, high-quality opportunities for responsible use and enjoyment of its natural resources.
- DNR has resources aligned with priorities.
- DNR models and promotes sustainable practices.
- DNR clearly articulates how we fulfill our mission.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Customer Focus	Results/outcome orientation
Empowerment	Long-term thinking
Accountability	Quality process improvement
Data-based decisions	Valuing Employees Collaboration
Integrity	Mutual Respect

CORE COMPETENCIES FOR EMPLOYEES

Integrity	Accountability
Technical Competence	Common Sense
High Productivity	Customer Focus
Interpersonal Skills	Team Player

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES FOR SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS

Strategic Planning	Employee Development	Collaboration
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DNR is proud of its commitment to excellence and strives to be seen as a leader in these efforts within state government. Staff challenges themselves to improve processes, provide quality customer service, and recognize the value in diversity of both our natural resources and our staff. Leadership has continued to support a number of efforts that, on the surface, do not directly align with DNR's core business, but have had or are having a profound impact on the agency's operation and culture.

I. HIRING AND PROMOTION PRACTICES

In February, the DNR provided detailed information on the agency's hiring practices. The Department has a documented, consistent process for recruiting, screening, interviewing and hiring. It is the policy of the DNR to provide equal treatment in employment and provision of services to applicants, employees and customers without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, disability or veteran status.

CHANGES TO HIRING PRACTICES

HIRING AND SCREENING STUDY

The DNR is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer. It is the intent of the DNR to hire persons and promote employees based on their qualifications for the position, and potential for further growth within the agency and the State. The DNR also encourages and targets the employment and promotion of persons in Protected Classes; i.e., female, minority and persons with disabilities, where the job class is underutilized, as determined by the Iowa Department of Administrative Services – Human Resources Enterprise (HRE).

The purpose of this study is to validate the use of the DNR's established screening process. Specifically this study will determine whether the DNR's established screening process unfairly excludes applicants with Protected Class status who apply for positions in underutilized job classes from the interview pool. Permanent DNR employees will also be included in this study to ensure that they are not unfairly disqualified. This study will be implemented on August 1, 2008 and will be evaluated at the end of six months.

For the purpose of this study, the Hiring Team will be responsible for facilitating all hires for vacant positions in the top four underutilized EEO Occupational Class Codes in the DNR. These class codes are (1) Natural Resource Technician 1 and 2; (2) Park Ranger and Conservation Officer; (3) Natural Resource Biologist; (4) PSE, EO, Park Manager (see Appendix A). The established screening process will be modified to permit all Protected Class and internal applicants in the top 5 underutilized occupational class codes to be interviewed. Additionally, a member of the DNR's Diversity Action Taskforce will serve on each interview team for these study classes.

The Hiring and Promotion Study will be conducted as follows:

1. All applicants are independently screened, regardless of Protected Class or DNR employment status, by the hiring supervisor and Hiring Team facilitator. This initial screening evaluates the applicant's work history, written materials, and their ability to follow application instructions.
2. After the initial screening, a secondary competency-based screening is independently conducted, regardless of Protected Class status or DNR employment status, by the hiring supervisor and Hiring Team facilitator.

3. The hiring supervisor and Hiring Team facilitator will meet subsequently to discuss the results of their respective scoring and determine the top ranking applicants to invite for an interview.
4. The Hiring Team Data Manager will update the screening chart to include the underutilization coding from the HRE certification list. Those applicants who were not included in the original determination of persons to invite for an interview, who are either Protected Class applicants or internal applicants, will be interviewed. These applicants will comprise the study group.
5. The hiring supervisor and Hiring Team facilitator will determine how best to interview the applicants, which may include a two phase process. Shorter, initial interviews will be conducted, followed by full, formal interviews with the top scoring applicants identified through the established screening process, and those applicants from the study group who demonstrate critical position specific competencies during the shorter initial interview.

Data will be collected for each hire consisting of the following:

1. Total applicants on the HRE certification list.
2. Total applicants who met the initial screening criteria.
3. Total applicants who met the secondary screening criteria and were invited for an interview; i.e., established screening process.
4. Total applicants who did not meet the initial screening criteria.
 - a. Protected Class status
 - b. Current DNR employees
5. Total applicants who met the initial screening criteria but were not initially selected for an interview.
 - a. Protected Class status
 - b. Current DNR employees
6. Total applicants who were interviewed as a result of the study.
 - a. Protected Class status
 - b. Current DNR employees
7. Outcome of the established selection process.
 - a. Initial interview pool
 - b. Study pool
 - c. Status of final applicants; i.e. DNR employee, female, minority, or persons with disabilities

The Deputy Director will be responsible for monitoring the selection decisions to ensure their compliance with this study and the State's Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Anti-Discrimination Policy. When a job class is underutilized, Protected Class status may be a selection factor for employment among qualified applicants. In those instances where the job class is underutilized, and where two or more individuals are equally qualified, the position shall be offered to that applicant with Protected Class status.

The Deputy Director will communicate any changes in this study to DNR supervisors, the Hiring Team and HRE.

II. Recruitment Plan and Report

TASKFORCE FOR WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

Five years ago, the DNR undertook the first Iowa Excellence Self-Assessment Report and subsequent improvement plan, which identified the need to implement workforce planning and re-activate our Taskforce for Workplace Diversity. As a result, the DNR embarked on a significant effort to define and understand the employees, the work environment and the agency's future need for outstanding talent. This was critical to formulating plans and evaluating policies. The Taskforce for Workplace Diversity (DTF) was very active and involved in hosting events such as the "Big Tent" Diversity Day and developing the department's H-1B policy (work authorization for non-U.S. citizens). The Department actively supported the work of the Taskforce and solicited ideas for innovative changes.

Over the last two fiscal years, the DTF has been responsible for a number of activities and accomplishments including:

- Developed and implemented the Front Line Recruiters program
- Developed the DNR's H-1B policy
- Created a standardized group of websites, targeting underrepresented communities, to post vacancy announcements. Sites used consistently include:
 - Division of Latino Affairs
 - Division of Persons with Disabilities
 - Division on the Status of African Americans
 - Division on the Status of Women
 - Commission on the Status of Asians and Pacific Islanders
 - Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa
 - University of Iowa
 - Iowa State University
 - University of Northern Iowa
 - Drake University
 - Des Moines Area Community College
 - Des Moines Public Schools
 - Grand View College
 - Iowa Council for International Understanding
 - Polk County Conservation Board
 - Iowa Workforce Development
 - Smart Career Move
- Assisted in developing relationships with Iowa's universities
- Presented at the annual diversity conference
- Promoted diversity in the *Iowa Outdoors* magazine (assisting with article ideas and contacts)
- Organized the Big Tent Event and conducted a follow up survey

With the onset of the new fiscal year, the Diversity Taskforce has been reinvigorated, and asked to take on new challenges with measurable results. The new Diversity Action Taskforce will be tasked with activities in three main areas: recruiting, hiring and retention.

RECRUITING ACTIVITIES

The DNR has enjoyed a stable and dependable workforce for the last 20 years; however, with the recent increase in retirements, this is changing. An increased demand for high-quality candidates, competition from other natural resources agencies, and a limited supply of potential recruits calls for the agency to go above and beyond the basic, traditional recruiting channels that have historically used (i.e. BrassRing and sporadic targeted outreach) in order to ensure workforce stability.

To hire the best and the brightest, DNR has to do a better job letting prospective recruits know that the Department is interested in them. DNR's goal is to become an Employer of Choice for college graduates and job seekers in science and engineering fields. Work toward achieving this goal must occur even before potential candidates start a job search and efforts must be made to continue to improve visibility even as they are searching. As such, DNR is pro-active in its recruiting activities and has both long-term and short-term initiatives.

On October 26, 2007, Governor Culver and Lt. Governor Judge declared their commitment to achieve and maintain a diverse workforce in state government through the issuance of Executive Order #4. Department leadership has stated its unwavering support and leadership to further develop a dynamic and diverse workforce and have made their commitment clear by encouraging staff to participate in a variety of recruiting activities on state-wide basis. Recently a survey designed to measure staff participation in a variety of recruiting activities was completed (see Appendix B). The survey indicated that more than 14 percent of DNR staff participated in at least one recruiting activity. Of those responding, 19 percent participated in a recruiting or job fair; 37 percent made a presentation to a class (any level) on careers in natural resources, and 40 percent hosted an intern, provided job shadowing or mentored a high school or college student. In addition, more than 81 percent indicated they had recruited someone they knew for an open position within the Department.

No specific budget is provided or identified for recruiting activities or programs. A number of funding sources are used to implement staff training and retention programs. Many of the activities are done at little or no cost, other than travel and staff time. Cost related to paid advertisements is covered by the specific job unit in which the vacancy occurs. In FY06, the DNR specifically dedicated a portion of a position to support recruitment and outreach to encourage more diversity among job applicants. This commitment of resources has lead to building exciting new partnerships across Iowa that help spread the word that the

DNR is a welcoming and supportive place to work. Since that time numerous recruiting activities have been initiated including:

- Recruited to a national audience by posting to CareerBuilder.com;
- Used unique recruiting tools like Craigslist, LinkedIn, MySpace and FaceBook to reach potential employees;
- Created the “Hire and Train” program to provide skill development opportunities for new hires within the Wildlife Bureau;
- Updated DNR’s employment website;
- With the assistance an intern from Central College, worked with DOT and DHS to create a concept for a new website targeted to recruit 15-30 year olds to public-sector employment.
- Participated in numerous recruiting fairs throughout Iowa and surrounding states;
 - Iowa State – Agriculture Career Fair, both spring and fall
 - University of Iowa – Health, Science and Engineering Career Fair
 - University of Northern Iowa – fall and spring Career Fairs
 - Northwest Missouri State University – fall and spring Career Fairs
 - Kirkwood Community College
 - Dordt College
 - Coe College
 - Hawkeye Tech Community College
- Developed a division-wide diversity and recruiting plan for Conservation and Recreation;
- Attended multiple Greater Des Moines Partnership Multicultural Receptions;
- Participation in the state-wide Strategic Recruiting team;
- Survey staff to gather information about the variety of DNR resources spent on recruiting;
- Purchased a weekly advertisement in the Des Moines Register directing people to the agency website;
- Posting job vacancy notices in trade journals or association newsletters;
- Partnered with marketing students from Central College to improve recruiting efforts for the DNR AmeriCorps program;
- Participated in a variety of community events, including I’ll Make Me A World and the Asian Heritage Festival;
- Increased the use of DAS BrassRing for temporary, seasonal and AmeriCorps positions;
- Development and use of “Guidelines for Conducting Interviews” to ensure agency-wide consistency during interviews.

Nurturing new natural resource professionals has been a Department strategic initiative for a number of years. The DNR recognizes that many of the challenges faced by the Department in trying to achieve a diverse workforce begins with a lack of females, minorities and persons with disabilities choosing careers in natural resources. Over the last four years staff, on all levels, has worked to develop relationships with students, from elementary to college. A

number of tools have been employed to engage students. As noted in the recruiting survey, 46 percent of staff engaged in recruiting activities participated in some class activity or discussion about careers in natural resources. Grants have been received to assist in creating more opportunities for students in Protected Classes and urban areas to experience and learn about natural resources and stewardship. Further, the DNR is active in providing job shadowing, mentoring and service learning activities and events for all grade levels. As students enter college and are interested in internships or summer jobs, the DNR has created a number of opportunities. The Department has the largest number of seasonal and temporary workers in the executive branch (FY07 – 400). Many of these positions are held by students or recent graduates. This experience gives them hands-on skill building, and a wide variety of learning experiences, ultimately making them better candidates for vacant positions.

The DNR also uses both formal and informal internships. The Pollution Prevention (P²) program is a nationally recognized, awarding winning program that matches upper level engineering students with Iowa industries to reduce pollution and energy usage, and achieve other environmentally beneficial outcomes. The Engineering Bureau also has a formal program for engineering students that requires a six-month commitment with an additional three month option. Many informal internships are also supported within the agency. The DNR is an active participant in the University of Iowa's Des Moines Program. Interns are also regularly placed from Central College, Simpson College, Drake University, Iowa State University and Dordt College.

Another program the DNR uses to move students from the classroom to full-time positions is AmeriCorps. The DNR has the largest program in the state with 54 full and part time members. The AmeriCorps experience allows members to learn skills, increase knowledge and demonstrate behaviors that are necessary to be the successful job applicant. In FY06, 35% of all DNR AmeriCorps members were successful in finding full-time employment with the DNR.

In addition to those above, other activities have been implemented to help the DNR nurture new natural resource professions. These include:

- Increased internship and job shadowing opportunities available to high school and college aged students;
- Participated in numerous mock interviews, leadership trainings and discussions about natural resource careers at state colleges and universities;
- Developed a network of minority contacts at state universities;
- Received a grant to target minority groups for our Outdoor Journey camp for 12-15 year old girls. Participants will be tracked over the next ten years to determine if their interest in a natural resource career changes;
- Encouraged and provided support for service learning projects for students of all ages;

- Worked with Des Moines schools to provide leadership and stewardship training;
- Participation in "Taking the Road Less Traveled - A Career Conference for Girls" conferences sponsored by Iowa State University's Program for Women in Science and Engineering;
- Developed a program and ongoing partnership with the Central Iowa Boys and Girls Club to expose participants to natural resources and stewardship concepts and education;
- Developed partnerships with other state agencies to ensure greater outreach to potential employees.

As demonstrated above, the DNR has taken a proactive approach to recruiting and outreach. Over the last two years the percentage of employees in underutilized classes has changed.

2009 RECRUITING PLAN

As an agency, the DNR recognizes the benefits of a more diverse workforce. In fact, the 2008 DNR Strategic Plan has a strategy related to diversity and hiring (see Appendix C). Specifically the strategy includes:

- DNR effectively recruits "protected class" applicants for vacant underutilized positions.
- DNR retains "protected class" employees for as long or longer than the average years of service.
- Develop and implement a long-term initiative to nurture young people for a career in natural resources.

In FY07, the DNR's workforce was 28.2 percent female (an increase of 1.3 percent over the previous fiscal year), 5.4 percent minority (no change from the previous fiscal year) and 4.4 percent persons with disabilities (a decrease of .5 percent from the previous fiscal year). The Department has struggled with increasing diversity because many of the positions are in traditionally male-dominated fields. To help combat this, the DNR has implemented long-term initiatives targeting middle and high school students.

The Diversity Action Taskforce (DAT) has been asked to take an active roll in leading recruiting efforts. This group has been tasked with leading the Front Line Recruiting efforts for the DNR. Management has made the commitment that for each DAT member who recruits a Protected Class candidate, and who is the successful candidate, will be recognized and rewarded. In addition, the new employee and the member who recruited them will be taken for a celebratory lunch by the DAT chairperson. Further, if the candidate is retained beyond the probationary period, the member who recruited them may again be rewarded.

HARD TO FILL POSITIONS

The DNR uses more than 90 different job classifications for its 945 full-time employees. Of those, supervisors consistently report that the Environmental Engineer classification is hard to fill. This position is not underutilized for minorities, but is for women and persons with disabilities (PWD). Survey data from the recent Workforce Planning survey (sent as part of the DAS/DOM workforce planning initiative) indicates supervisors believe that salary, limited recruiting efforts and geographic location are the biggest barriers to hiring qualified staff.

STAFFING PROJECTIONS

In terms of projected staffing needs for FY09, with the demise of charter agency status, the DNR now has an FTE cap, and managers are struggling to determine what positions for which there is funding will be filled. No projections are available at this time.

As outlined in the section above (Hiring and Promotion Practices), DNR has developed a study to determine if the current screening process negatively impacts underrepresented candidates. This study will impact the classifications that are most unbalanced. In addition, DNR recruiting efforts have become more visible and are carried out with the help of many (at all levels) in the agency. Respondents to the recent recruiting survey indicated that 14 percent of DNR employees have been engaged in at least one recruiting activity in the last two fiscal years. Of those who have been active, 45 percentage report they will continue to be engaged in recruiting activities in FY09. New recruiting activities that are currently being planned include:

- Create a Recruiting Team;
- Create an "Indication of Interest" card to be used at recruiting events, enabling the DNR to track and retain information about people interested in working for the Department;
- Determine where additional bi-lingual employees would be beneficial;
- Improve the coordination of Department recruiting resources;
- Conduct statewide recruiting and inclusion events in cooperation with Department of Transportation and Department of Human Services;
- Include DAT in recruiting efforts;
- Place regular advertisements in African American and Latino newspapers;
- Implement recruiting efforts at the Iowa State Fair;
- Update the standardized group of websites, targeting Protected Classes, to post vacancy announcements;
- Partner with Vocational Rehabilitation to increase the number of staff, interns and job shadow experiences for persons with disabilities;
- Develop a relationship with other programs for persons with disabilities looking to improve job skills.

New activities that will be implemented to help the DNR nurture new natural resource professions include:

- Create a new newsletter targeted to middle school students;
- Develop a new series of outreach efforts and opportunities to provide Department contact with and opportunities for students from middle school through college;
- Create and implement an annual DNR AmeriCorps recruiting program for high school students;
- Participate in the development of a state-wide internship program (an outcome of the recent recruiting Kaizen);
- Increase service learning activities for middle school, high school and college students
- Provide job shadowing/service learning opportunity for the participants in the Iowa Youth Leadership International Class 2008;
- Create of a process to manage job shadowing.

These long and short term activities, which are currently being employed, are planned to continue:

- Continue to track Outdoor Journey for Girls participants;
- Participate in university leadership programs;
- Participate in mock interviews at state colleges and universities;
- Participate in a variety of career and job fairs;
- Use unique recruiting tools like Craigslist, LinkedIn, MySpace and FaceBook to reach potential employees;
- Update DNR's employment website;
- Continue partnership with DOT and DHS to host a new website targeted to recruit 15-30 year olds to public-sector employment;
- Implement the division-wide diversity and recruiting plan for Conservation and Recreation;
- Attend a variety of community events;
- Participate in the state-wide Strategic Recruiting team;
- Gather information about the variety of DNR resources spent on recruiting;
- Post job vacancy notices in trade journals or association newsletters;
- Increase the use of DAS BrassRing for temporary, seasonal and AmeriCorps positions;

DNR leadership continues to support and monitor recruiting and outreach activities. Recruiting a diverse workforce is a high-profile effort within the DNR.

II. Retention Report and Plan

RETENTION ACTIVITIES

As stated above, the DNR has enjoyed many years of stable employment. This can be attributed to a number of factors. Primarily, the stability is caused by the fact that, for many staff members, working for this agency is more than a job. In many cases, environmental stewardship is a passion. Further, a lack of private sector jobs in the careers the Department employs the majority of staff also contributes to the stability. Beyond the agency, few jobs exist for people who desire to work with wildlife, fisheries, parks and many of the environmental fields. These factors have led to positive results like continuity in DNR's workforce, but also a lack of promotional opportunities within the agency. Staff continues to voice this concern in the annual employee survey. In the FY06 Retention Survey, lack of promotional opportunities rank third among the factors that would cause employees to leave the Department. The factor rated most likely to cause an employee to leave the DNR was a negative work environment.

The wave of retirements that has begun to affect the DNR has provided a number of promotional opportunities, as well as the ability to redesign positions, aligning them with new work processes and customer needs. Over the last two fiscal years there has been an increase in the number of promotions in the DNR (1.9 percent in FY06 and 2.5 percent in FY07). This trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

TURNOVER

The DNR's retention rate (14.3 years) is slightly higher the state average (13.79 years) and is higher than non-government organizations. A review of FY07 and 08 turnover data confirms that there is no turnover pattern with regard to job classification or supervisor. Separation of both long-term and short-term employees occurs in all divisions and through out all pay grades. The most common reason employees leave, besides retirement, is the lack of career advancement opportunities.

One of the strategic goals for the DNR is to retain Protected Class employees as long or longer than the average length of service. A closer look at the retention data shows that the average length of service for minorities within the DNR is 11.89 years, less than 2.5 years shorter than the overall average. Minority employee retention is increasing. In FY04, the average length of service for minority employees was 10.99 years. Female employees are retained, on average, for less time. In FY07, the average length of service for females was 11.08 years, more than four years less than the overall average, however; this average too has increased very slightly since FY04 when the overall average was 10.92. A longer length of service may indicate that employees demonstrate more knowledge and have more job related skills; such competence may potentially increase productivity and lower turnover. The DNR is working to ensure both employee engagement and length of service.

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND ENGAGEMENT

The DNR strives to hire and retain high performers. The Department conducts an annual employee satisfaction survey to solicit feedback from all employees, and has administered a retention survey in the recent past. The use of these tools provides the DNR with a snapshot of what employees are thinking and feeling about their jobs. In FY06 Retention Survey, staff reported that the top three reasons they stayed with the DNR was 1) like their job/interesting work, 2) benefits, and 3) work schedules. The factor that was least likely to compel them to leave was their relationship with co-workers. Historically, the DNR separation has been low, even with retirements and terminations included. In FY07, the total separation rate was 6 percent. Resignations (voluntary separation) was much lower – 1.7 percent.

Responses to the DNR's annual employee satisfaction survey have been the catalyst for many changes within the Department. The development of a more comprehensive on-boarding process, Best Management Practices for managers and supervisors, and the automated employee evaluation tracking system are examples of projects that were a direct response to the annual employee survey results. The survey also was the impetus for organizational changes such as video conferencing, moving the legal staff to more private offices, and weekly communication from Department senior leaders.

The FY08 employee satisfaction survey indicated an overall satisfaction of 3.71 out of 5. Over the last five years, staff, as a whole, has remained fairly satisfied. The opportunity to provide a suggestion or comment has varied, depending upon what is occurring at the time. With the exception of FY08, resource issues (funding, staffing, and equipment) and internal communications were the most frequently mentioned. In FY08 leadership replaced internal communication as the number two concern. Over the years, the use of the Gallup Q12 (plus the open-ended question) has been the source of many comments. Members of the Iowa Excellence team and the Deputy Director have been actively engaged in educating staff about the value of the survey instrument and the actions the Department has taken as a result of the feedback.

The Workforce Planning initiative was developed from the Iowa Excellence evaluation process. Many initiatives were created, some that had enormous value to the DNR and others that seemed to be the next logical step, but in the end, did not to have the planned impact. One project that has been used successfully was the creation of core and leadership competencies (see Appendix D). These competencies, plus some position-specific ones, have become the basis for the DNR hiring process. Screening criteria and interview questions are competency-based, and tie directly to the skills, abilities, knowledge and demonstrated behaviors that are needed to be successful in DNR positions. A pilot study was done that evaluated supervisors' proficiency with each core and leadership competency. To date, some supervisors still use this to augment the evaluation process and focus on HOW work is completed – not WHAT work is completed. Information pertaining to core and leadership

competencies is available on the DNR Intranet, as is a sample screening criteria scoring sheet.

As demonstrated above, the Department is actively engaged in employee retention activities. Some actions that have been implemented include:

- Requires diversity training for all new employees;
- Provides new employee orientation on a regular basis, with the goal being new employees having orientation within the first six weeks;
- Created a new employee checklist, outlining numerous actions and resources supervisors need to provide before and shortly after a new employee starts;
- Delivers an annual diversity message from the director of the DNR;
- Provides individual mentoring for employees on resume writing and interview skills;
- Provides “Managers, the Real Deal” class. This is a class developed and delivered by DNR bureau chiefs and is held annually in regional locations throughout the state. This class is encouraged for any staff members who think they might be interested in a supervisory position.
- Supports informal mentoring of new supervisors;
- Provides annual supervisor and manager training, including diversity training;
- Conducts an annual employee satisfaction survey;
- Designed and ongoing support of a new employee intranet site;
- Created and disseminated of “Connect the Dots,” a newsletter for staff on Department improvement committees and processes;
- Created a committee to address internal communication;
- Developed and implemented Best Management Practices for Managers guidelines, manual and annual training;
- Provided training to all managers and supervisors on stepping up and speaking out when they see something that is not right, training on Gay, Lesbian, Transgendered and Transsexual Orientation, and the Family Leave Medical Act;
- Created of a comprehensive employee evaluation and individual performance plan tracking and reminder system;
- Revamped the required courses for supervisors (with courses having to be repeated every five years);
- Developed and implemented a survey that provides an opportunity to provide anonymous feedback about supervisors performance;
- Sponsored and participated in the 2007 and 2008 Iowa Women in Natural Resources annual conference, including a presentation on diversity.

No specific budget is provided or identified for retention activities or programs. A number of funding sources are used to implement staff training and retention programs.

2009 RETENTION PLAN

The DNR takes pride in these accomplishments, but recognizes they must continue to make progress. Department staff works on a daily basis to improve Iowa's environment and often take inspiration from its beauty and complexity. Staff instinctively knows that diversity in the natural world is a sign of strength, health and sustainability. This can be likened to the need to maintain the agency's diverse and quality workforce. A high-performing group of employees can bring together an outstanding combination of education, experience and individual perspectives, and will be stronger, smarter and better able to meet future challenges. Thus, the DNR will continue to be a leader in this effort and will fully support the Governor's Executive Order #4.

New retention activities that are planned for FY09 include:

- Align the retention survey with the exit survey and ensure its use by supervisors;
- Administer an updated, Department-wide retention survey;
- Include a diversity message to New Employee Orientation;
- Create a New Supervisor Orientation;
- Create a survey for hiring managers, ensuring that the right person was hired for open positions;
- Establish a DNR diversity award as part of the State's Golden Dome recognition program;
- Participate in diversity training provided by DAS.

These activities, which are currently being employed, are planned to continue:

- Require diversity training for all new employees;
- Conduct New Employee Orientation on a regular basis;
- Use of the New Employee Checklist, outlining numerous actions and resources supervisors need to provide before and shortly after a new employee starts;
- Continue the Director's annual diversity message;
- Conduct annual bureau meetings with the Deputy Director;
- Provide individual mentoring for employees on resume writing and interview skills;
- Support informal mentoring of new supervisors;
- Conduct the annual employee satisfaction survey;
- Support the new employee intranet site;
- Continue internal communication committee;
- Use employee evaluation and individual performance plan tracking and reminder system;
- Use the anonymous feedback about supervisors performance;
- Sponsors and participate in the Iowa Women in Natural Resources annual conference.

CONCLUSION

Although the Department is proud of the past accomplishments in affirmative action and diversity, DNR understands that work must continue to create a diverse organization that mirrors the changing demographics of Iowa. The DNR will continue to implement and support activities that will result in a more diverse workforce even though resources – both time and money - are limited. As indicated by the list of activities planned for FY09, the DNR strives to go above and beyond what might be expected and will gladly assist, and partner with, other agencies as they work to improve recruiting, retention and diversity initiatives.